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mass defect

author and social critic Dwight Macdonald (b. 1893; d. 1982) in the essay "Masscult and Midcult" (1960)]

**de/fect**, *Physics*. the amount by which the mass of an atomic nucleus differs from the sum of the masses of its constituent particles, being the mass equivalent of the energy released in the formation of the nucleus. [1925-30]

**de/binding energy**, *Physics*. the energy required to separate the nucleons of a nucleus. *Br. Mass* (n), *n.* Billiards. a game made by hitting the cue ball with the cue held at an angle quite perpendicular to the table. Also called *billiards*. [1870-75; < Fr. *lit.*, hammered, i.e., shot. < *Fr.* *lit.*, straight down, equiv. to *masse* sledge from above, see *MASS* + *-é* *Fr.*]

**de/ma** (mə sē'nə), *n.* a city in N New York, on the Lawrence River. 12,851.

**de/ma** (mə sē'nə), *n.* *An-dré* (än drā'), *duc de* (dük də) (mə sē'nə), *n.* *Fr.* *re vō lè*; *It.* *re vō lè* and *Prince d'Ess* (prens d'ess) (mə sē'nə), *n.* French marshal under Napoleon. 1758-1817.

**de/energy equation** (mas'en/er jē), *Physics*. the equation,  $E=mc^2$ , formulated by Albert Einstein, expressing the equivalence between mass and energy. *E* is energy, *m* is mass, and *c* is the velocity of light. [1940-45]

**de/net** (mə sē'nə; *Fr.* *mas' ne'*), *n.* *Jules Émile* (zhyl' a mēl' frā dā rēk'), 1842-1912, French composer.

**de/ster** (mə sē'tər), *n.* *Anat.* a short, thick, mastoid muscle, the action of which assists in closing the jaw by raising the mandible or lower jaw. [1680-70; < Gk *masstēr*, var. of *masstēr* chewer, *masstēr*, to *masē*, var. of *massthai* to chew + *-tēr* suffix] —**mas-se-ter-ic** (mas'i tēr'ik), *adj.*

**de/sour** (mə sūr'; *Fr.* *ma sœr'*), *n.* pl. —**seurs** (sœr'), *n.* a man who provides massage as a profession or occupation. [1875-80; < F; see *MASSAGE*, *-seur*]

**de/souse** (mə sōs'; *Fr.* *ma sœz'*), *n.* a woman who provides massage as a profession or occupation. [1875-80; < F; see *MASSAGE*, *-seuse*]

**de/sy** (mas'ē), *n.* 1. *Vincent*, 1887-1967, Canadian politician; governor general 1952-59. 2. *William* (ferman), 1856-1925, New Zealand statesman, born in Ireland; prime minister 1912-25.

**de/hysteria**, *Psychol.* a condition affecting a group of persons, characterized by excitement or anxiety, irrational behavior or beliefs, or inexplicable symptoms of illness. [1930-35]

**de/sicort** (mas'i kōt'), *n.* monoxide of lead, PbO, in the form of a yellow powder, used as a pigment and in the manufacture of glass. [1425-75; late ME *massicort* < MF < *It.* *massicotta* from *maschiqiniya*, perh. < Gk]

**de/sell** (ma sēl'; *Fr.* *ma sēl'*), *n.* 1. a compact form of a mountain range, containing one or more peaks. 2. a large elevated block of old complex rocks resistant to both erosion and crustal folding. 3. a band of the earth's crust raised or depressed as a unit, bounded by faults. [1515-25; < F, n. use of *massif* (see *MASS*)]

**de/sel Central** (ma sēf sän tral'), a great plateau of the chief water divide of France, in the central part.

**de/sillon** (mas'ā lon'), *n.* a city in NE Ohio. 30,557.

**de/sine** (mä sēn'), *n.* *Lé-o-nide* (lä ō nēd'), 1896-1950, U.S. ballet dancer and choreographer, born in Russia.

**de/singer** (mas'ōn jēr), *n.* *Philip*, 1583-1640, English dramatist; collaborated with John Fletcher.

**de/sinis-a** (mas'ā nis'ā), *n.* *Masinissa*.

**de/sive** (mas'iv), *adj.* 1. consisting of or forming a mass; bulky and heavy: *massive columns*. 2. large and heavy-looking: *a massive forehead*. 3. large in amount, or degree: *a massive breakdown in communications*; *massive reductions in spending*. 4. solid or substantial; great or imposing: *massive erudition*. 5. solid, having no outward crystal form, although sometimes crystalline in internal structure. [1375-1425; ME (see *MASS*, *-ive*); *R. ME* *massif* < MF] —**mas-sive-ly**, *adv.* —**mas-sive-ness**, *mas-siv-i-ty*, *n.*

**de/sive retaliation**, a strategy of military counterattack that involves the use of nuclear weapons. [1955, Amer.]

**de/sless** (mas'lis), *adj.* *Physics*. pertaining to an elementary particle having zero rest mass, as a photon. [1935-40; *MASS* + *-less*] —**mas-sless-ness**, *n.*

**de/sman**, a hypothetical common man, esp. one who is typical of a mass society, to be characterized by the absence of unique values or distinct personality traits, to lack a sense of personal or social responsibility, and to be readily manipulated by the techniques developed by mass media. [1925-30]

**de/smarketing**, the production and distribution of a product intended to be sold to a relatively high proportion of the population. [1940-45] —**mas-s' mar'**, *n.*

**de/smarket pa/perback**, a relatively inexpensive paperback book, typically measuring about 4 1/4 x 7 1/4 x 1 1/4 in., that is distributed on newsstands, in supermarkets, etc., as well as in bookstores. Also, **mas-s' market pa/perback**. Cf. *trade paperback*.

**de/smedium**, *pl.* *mass media*. any of the means of mass communication, as television or newspapers, that reach very large numbers of people. [1920-25]

**de/smeeting**, a large or general assembly to discuss some matter of common interest or to hear a speaker. *See* *meeting*. [1725-35, Amer.]

**de/smerchandiser**, a retailer or retail store that sells large quantities of goods quickly through means as discounting, customer self-service, or unattended display and packaging, as in a warehouse. —**mas-s' mer/chandising**.

**mass/ move/ment**, an organized effort by a large number of people, esp. those not forming part of the elite of a given society, to bring about pervasive changes in existing social, economic, or political institutions, frequently characterized by charismatic leadership. [1895-1900]

**mass/ noun**, *Gram.* a noun, as *water*, *electricity*, or *happiness*, that typically refers to an indefinitely divisible substance or an abstract notion, and that in English cannot be used, in such a sense, with the indefinite article or in the plural. [1930-35]

**mass/ num/ber**, *Physics*. the integer nearest in value to the atomic weight of an atom and equal to the number of nucleons in the nucleus of the atom. Symbol: *A*. [1920-25]

**Mass/son disk** (mas'son), a white disk on which a series of concentric gray circles appear to vanish intermittently when the disk is rotated, used for testing a person's fluctuation of attention and visual threshold.

**Mass-so-rah** (ma sōr'ā, -sōr'ā), *n.* *Masorah*. Also, **Mass-so-ra**.

**Mass-so-rete** (mas'sō rēt'), *n.* *Masorete*.

**Mass-so-ret-ic** (mas'sō rēt'ik), *adj.* *Masoretic*. Also, **Mass-so-ret-i-cal**.

**mass-so-ther-a-py** (mas'sō thēr'ā pē), *n.* *Med.* treatment by massage. [*MASS*(AGE) + *-o-* + *THERAPY*] —**mas-so-ther'a-pist**, *n.*

**mass-pro-duce** (mas'prō dōs', -dyōs'), *v.t.*, *-duced*, *-duc-ing*. to produce or manufacture (goods) in large quantities, esp. by machinery. [1920-25] —**mas-s' pro-duc'er**, *n.* —**mas-s' pro-duc-i-ble**, *adj.*

**mass/ produc-tion**, the production or manufacture of goods in large quantities, esp. by machinery. [1915-20]

**mass/ psychol-ogy**, the study of the behavior of large groups of people. [1895-1900]

**mass/ soci-ety**, *Sociol.* a society whose members are characterized by having segmentalized, impersonal relations, a high degree of physical and social mobility, a spectator relation to events, and a pronounced tendency to conform to external popular norms. [1945-50]

**mass/ spec-tro-graph**, *Physics*. a mass spectroscopy for recording a mass spectrum on a photographic plate. [1915-20]

**mass/ spectrom-eter**, *Physics*. a device for identifying the kinds of particles present in a given substance: the particles are ionized and beamed through an electromagnetic field and the manner in which they are deflected is indicative of their mass and, thus, their identity. [1930-35]

**mass/ spec-troscope**, *Physics*. an instrument used to determine the masses of small, electrically charged particles. [1955-60] —**mas-s' spec-tro-scope**, *n.*

**mass/ spec-trum**, *Physics*. a spectrum of charged particles, arranged in order of mass or mass-to-charge ratios. [1915-20]

**mass/ trans-it**, a system of large-scale public transportation in a given metropolitan area, typically comprising buses, subways, and elevated trains. Cf. *rapid transit*.

**mass/ wast-ing**, *Geol.* downhill movement of soil and rock fragments induced by gravity. Also called *wasting*.

**mass-y** (mas'ē), *adj.*, **mass-i-est**, **mass-i-est**. *massive*. [1350-1400; ME; see *MASS*, *-y*] —**mas-s'i-ness**, *n.*

**Mass-sys** (mās'sis), *n.* *Quen-tin* (kwen'tin; *Eng.* *kwen'tin*), 1466?-1530, Flemish painter. Also, *Matsys*, *Met-sys*.

**mast** (mast, mäst), *n.* 1. *Naut.* a spar or structure rising above the hull and upper portions of a ship or boat to hold sails, spars, rigging, booms, signals, etc., at some point on the fore-and-aft line, as a foremast or mainmast. b. any of a number of individual spars composing such a structure, as a topmast supported on trestlebeams at the head of a lower mast. c. any of various portions of a single spar that are beside particular sails, as a topgallant mast and royal mast formed as a single spar. 2. Also called *pillar*, the upright support of a jib crane. 3. any upright pole, as a support for an aerial, a post in certain cranes, etc. 4. *before the mast*, *Naut.* as an unlicensed sailor: *He served several years before the mast*. —*v.t.* 5. to provide with a mast or masts. [bef. 900; ME; OE *mast*; *c. G.* *Mast*; akin to *L.* *malus* pole] —**mast/less**, *adj.* —**mast/like**, *adj.*

**mast<sup>2</sup>** (mast, mäst), *n.* the fruit of the oak and beech or other forest trees, used as food for hogs and other animals. [bef. 900; ME; OE *mast*; *c. G.* *Mast*; akin to *MEAT*]

**mast-**, var. of *masto-* before a vowel: *mastectomy*.

**mas-ta-ba** (mas'tā bā), *n.* 1. an ancient Egyptian tomb made of mud brick, rectangular in plan with sloping sides and flat roof. 2. (in Islamic countries) a fixed bench, esp. one of stone. Also, **mas'ta-bah**. [1595-1605; < *Ar.* *maṣṭabāh*]

**mas-tax** (mas'taks), *n.* the muscular pharynx of a rati-fier, containing a chewing apparatus. [1850-55; < NL < Gk *mástax* mouth, jaws, akin to *massthai* to chew]

**mas't ball**, *Naut.* an ornamental ball forming the truck of a mast.

**mas't band**, *Naut.* a hoop of metal around a mast, used as a reinforcement or as an object for attaching stays, tackles, etc.

**mas't bed**, *Naut.* a construction in a wooden deck around the opening for a mast.

**mas't cell**, *Biol.* a large granular cell, common in connective tissue, that produces heparin, histamine, and serotonin. [1885-90; partial trans. of *G.* *Mastzelle*, equiv. to *Mast* fattening of animals for slaughter, *MAST<sup>2</sup>* + *Zelle* cell]

**mas't clamp**, *Naut.* 1. a pierced slab of hardwood built into the deck structure of a small ship or boat to

receive the force of the mast, which is fitted tightly through it. 2. Also called **mast hasp**, a metal collar fitted to a thwart of a small boat to steady a mast.

**mast/ cloth**, *Naut.* 1. a partial lining sewed to the back of a square sail to prevent chafing from contact with the mast. 2. Also called **mast cov'er**, a cloth covering part of a mast to protect it against smoke from a funnel. [1635-45]

**mas-tec-to-my** (ma stek'tō mē), *n.*, *pl.* *-mies*. *Surg.* the operation of removing all or part of the breast or mamma. Also called **mammectomy**. [1920-25; *MAST-* + *-ECTOMY*]

**mas-ter** (mas'tər, mäs'tər), *n.* 1. a person with the ability or power to use, control, or dispose of something: *a master of six languages*; *to be master of one's fate*. 2. an owner of a slave, animal, etc. 3. an employer of workers or servants. 4. the male head of a household. 5. a person eminently skilled in something, as an occupation, art, or science: *the great masters of the Impressionist period*. 6. a person whose teachings others accept or follow: *a Zen master*. 7. *Chiefly Brit.* a male teacher or schoolmaster. 8. a worker qualified to teach apprentices and to carry on a trade independently. 9. a title given to a bridge or chess player who has won or placed in a certain number of officially recognized tournaments. 10. a person holding this title. 11. a person who commands a merchant ship; captain. 12. a victor or conqueror. 13. a presiding officer. 14. an officer of the court to whom some or all of the issues in a case may be referred for the purpose of taking testimony and making a report to the court. 15. *the Master*, Jesus Christ. 16. a person who has been awarded a master's degree. 17. a boy or young man (used chiefly as a term of address). 18. Also called **matrix**, an original document, drawing, manuscript, etc., from which copies are made. 19. a device for controlling another device operating in a similar way. Cf. *slave* (def. 5). 20. *Recording*. a. *matrix* (def. 13). b. a tape or disk from which duplicates may be made. 21. Also called **copy negative**. *Photog.* a film, usually a negative, used primarily for making large quantities of prints. 22. *See* **master of foxhounds**. 23. *Archaic*. a work of art produced by a master. —*adj.* 24. being master; exercising mastery; dominant. 25. chief or principal: *a master list*. 26. directing or controlling: *a master switch*. 27. of or pertaining to a master from which copies are made: *master film*; *master matrix*; *master record*; *master tape*. 28. dominating or predominant: *a master play*. 29. being a master of some occupation, art, etc.; eminently skilled: *a master diplomat*; *a master pianist*. 30. being a master carrying on one's trade independently, rather than a worker employed by another: *a master plumber*. 31. characteristic of a master; showing mastery. —*v.t.* 32. to make oneself master of; become an adept in: *to master a language*. 33. to conquer or overcome: *to master one's pride*. 34. to rule or direct as master: *to master a crew*. 35. *Recording*. to produce a master tape, disk, or record of: *The producer recorded, mixed, and mastered the new album*. [bef. 900; ME *maistre*, *maister*, OE *magister* < L; akin to *magnus* great] —**mas'ter-less**, *adj.*

—**Syn.** 1. adept, expert. 26. main, leading, primary, prime, cardinal. 31. adept, expert, skillful. 33. subdue, control. 34. govern, manage.

**mas'ter al/loy**, *Metal.* an alloy rich in certain elements, used in small quantities as an additive to melts of alloyed metal.

**mas'ter-at-arms** (mas'tər at'ārmz, mäs'tər-), *n.*, *pl.* **mas'ters-at-arms**. 1. an officer of a fraternal organization, veterans' society, or the like, empowered to maintain order, exclude unauthorized persons, etc. 2. *Navy*, a petty officer who has various duties, such as keeping order on the ship, taking charge of prisoners, etc. [1740-50]

**mas'ter bath**, a private bathroom adjoining a master bedroom.

**mas'ter bed/room**, a principal bedroom in a house or apartment, usually the largest, typically occupied by the person or persons who head the household. [1925-30]

**mas'ter build'er**, 1. a building contractor. 2. a person skilled in the art of building; architect. [1550-60]

**Mas'ter Build'er, The**, a play (1892) by Ibsen.

**mas'ter class**, a small class for advanced students, esp. a class in performance skills conducted by a distinguished musician. [1950-55]

**mas'ter cyl/in-der**, the hydraulic pump of an automotive braking system that contains a cylinder and one or two pistons, is actuated by the brake pedal, and supplies hydraulic fluid under pressure to the brakes at each wheel.

**mas'ter file**, *Computers*. a permanent file, periodically updated, that serves as an authoritative source of data.

**mas'ter-ful** (mas'tər fəl, mäs'tər-), *adj.* 1. dominating; self-willed; imperious. 2. having or showing the qualities of a master; authoritative; powerful. 3. showing mastery or skill; masterly: *a masterful performance*. [1300-50; ME; see *MASTER*, *-ful*] —**mas'ter-ful-ly**, *adv.* —**mas'ter-ful-ness**, *n.*

—**Syn.** 1. peremptory. 3. consummate, supreme; adept, expert, skilled, skillful, matchless.

—**Usage.** At an earlier time, both **MASTERFUL** and **MASTERLY** had two senses: "having a commanding or dominating nature or manner" and "possessing the skill of a master." The earliest sense of **MASTERLY**, "having a commanding nature," has been obsolete since the 18th century. **MASTERFUL** continues to be used in all varieties of speech and writing in both senses, despite the protests of some who prefer that **MASTERFUL** be restricted to the

CONCISE PRONUNCIATION KEY: act, cāpe, dāre, pārt; set, equal; if, ice; ox, über, order, oil, book, boot, out; up, urge; child; sing; shoe; thin; that; zh as in treasure. a = a as in alone, e as in system, i as in easily, o as in gallop, u as in circus; \* as in fire (fīr), hour (hōr). l and n can serve as syllabic consonants, as in *cradle* (krād'l), and *button* (but'n). See the full key inside the front cover.